



Vol. 561 Rs 25

Panchatantra

Crows and Owls and other stories



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Crows and owls and other stories

The original text of the Panchatantra in Sanskrit was probably written about 200 B.C. by a great Hindu scholar, Pandit Vishnu Sharma. But some of the tales themselves must be much older, their origin going back to the period of the Vedas and the Upanishads (1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.). In course of time, travellers took these stories with them to Persia and Arabia and finally, through Greece, they reached Europe. So far it has been translated into 50 or more languages of the world.

The Panchatantra is essentially connected with one of the branches of science known to us as the 'Nitishastra' in Sanskrit, which means 'A book of wise conduct in life'. It attempts to teach us how to understand people, how to choose reliable and trustworthy friends, how to meet difficulties and solve problems through tact and wisdom, and how to live in peace and harmony in the face of hypocrisy, deceit and the many pitfalls in life.

The Panchatantra is woven round the frame of a tale of a king who entrusts his three dull sons to a learned man, a Brahmin, called Pandit Vishnu Sharma, to enlighten their minds within six months. The Brahmin promises to educate them and takes them to his 'ashrama' (hermitage). There he recites to them his specially composed tales divided into five tantras (in Sanskrit 'pancha' means five and 'tantra' means systems or parts) on how to deal with people in life.

The Panchatantra is a rare book, for in no book can one find philosophy, psychology, politics, music, astronomy, human relations, etc. all discussed together in such a simple yet elegant style. This is exactly what Pandit Vishnu Sharma had in mind—to give as much knowledge to the princes in as uncomplicated a manner as possible. And no doubt not only the princes but also millions of listeners and readers for the last 2,200 years have benefited from his most unique book.

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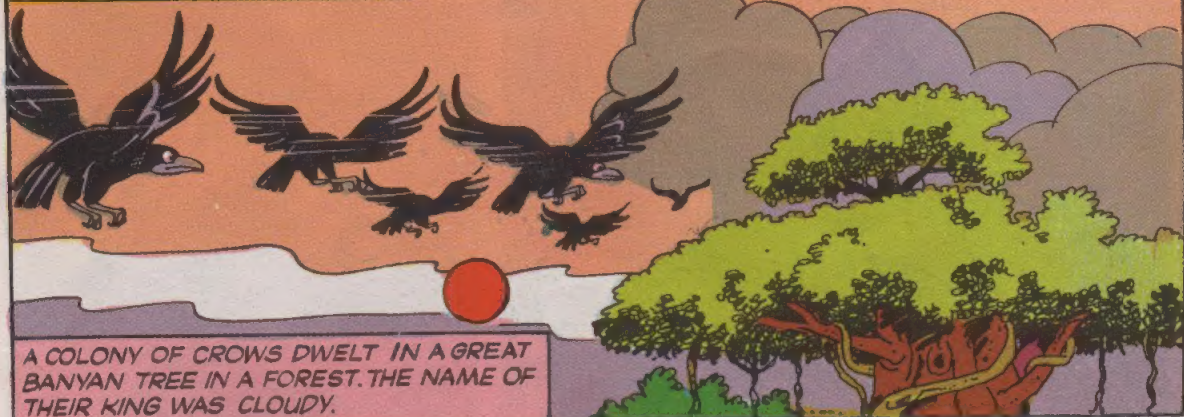
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CROWS AND OWLS



A COLONY OF CROWS DWELT IN A GREAT BANYAN TREE IN A FOREST. THE NAME OF THEIR KING WAS CLOUDY.

THE CROWS WERE CONSTANTLY HARASSED BY THEIR POWERFUL ENEMIES, THE OWLS. THEIR KING, FOE-CRUSHER WOULD ATTACK ANY CROW HE CAME ACROSS.



THEN ONE DAY, CLOUDY CALLED A MEETING OF HIS FIVE COUNSELLORS.

THE OWLS ARE BECOMING A MENACE.

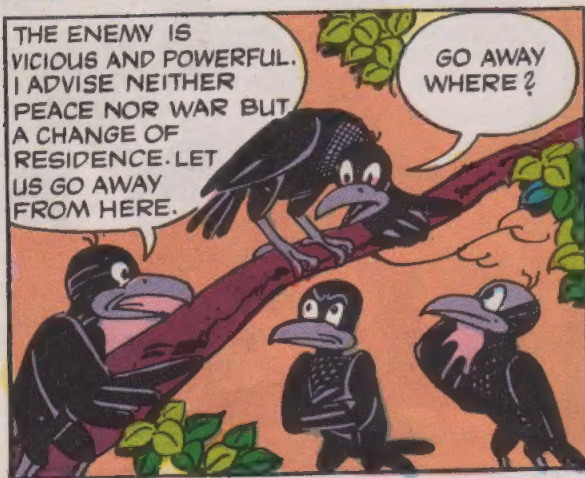


THEY ARE ARROGANT AND POWERFUL AND THEY ATTACK US AT NIGHT WHEN WE CANNOT SEE. WE CANNOT COUNTER-ATTACK DURING THE DAY BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY DWELL.



ADVISE ME, COUNSELLORS. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?





THEN CLOUDY TURNED TO A VERY OLD CROW NAMED LIVE-STRONG.

AND WHAT DO YOU ADVISE, REVERED SIR?

I ADVISE DUPLICITY, MY LORD.

ATTACK ME AT ONCE WITH A GREAT SHOW OF ANGER.

ATTACK YOU? MY WISEST MINISTER?

YES. WE MUST PUT UP THIS SHOW FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR FRIEND OVER THERE.

AN OWL!

LET HIM THINK WE'VE FALLEN OUT. THROW ME OUT OF THE TREE. THEN, WITH ALL YOUR SUBJECTS...

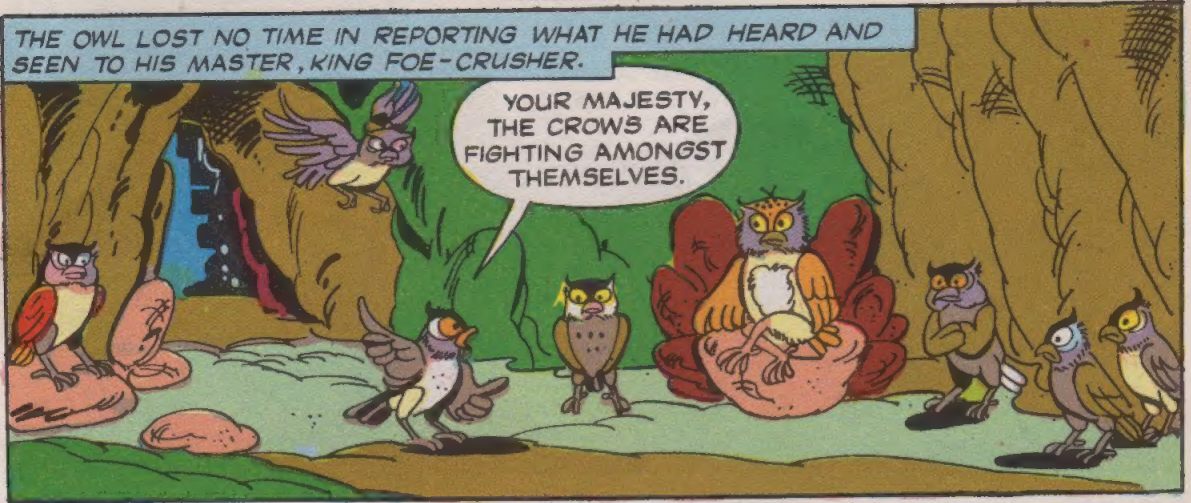
...FLY TO ANTELOPE MOUNTAIN.

AND WHAT WILL YOU DO?

I WILL BEFRIEND THE OWLS AND WIN THEIR TRUST. AND THEN I'LL FIND A WAY TO BRING ABOUT THEIR DOOM.

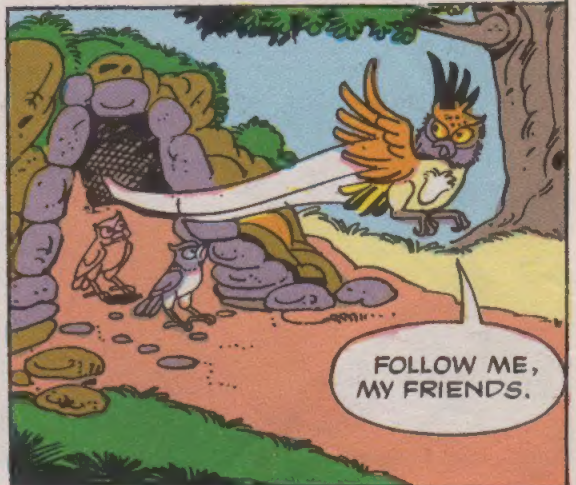


THE OWL LOST NO TIME IN REPORTING WHAT HE HAD HEARD AND SEEN TO HIS MASTER, KING FOE-CRUSHER.

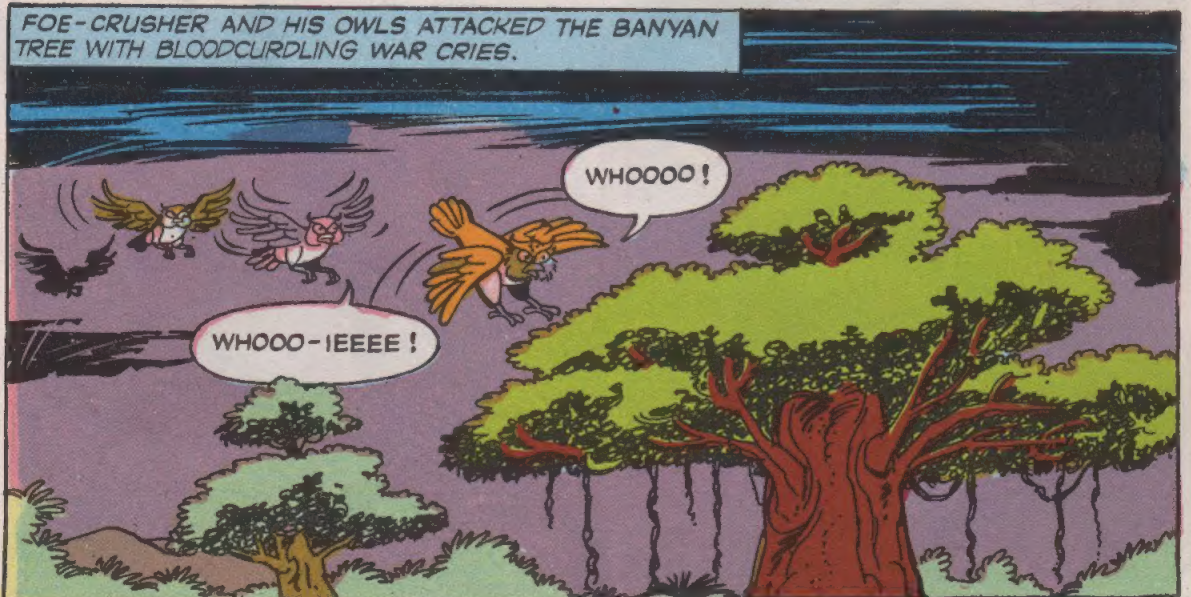


THEY HAVE THROWN OUT ONE OF THEIR MINISTERS.

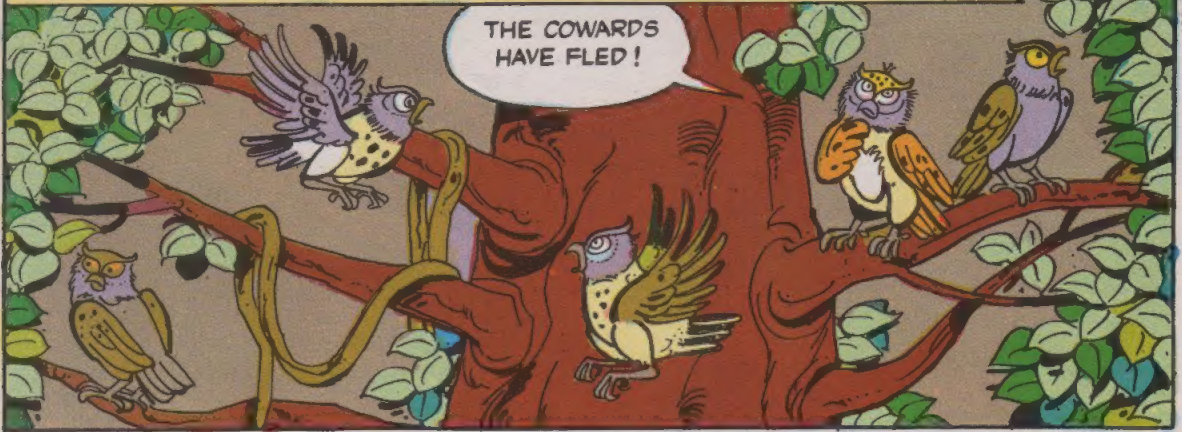
THEN THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO ATTACK THEM. A DISORGANISED ENEMY IS EASILY DEFEATED.



FOE-CRUSHER AND HIS OWLS ATTACKED THE BANYAN TREE WITH BLOODCURDLING WAR CRIES.



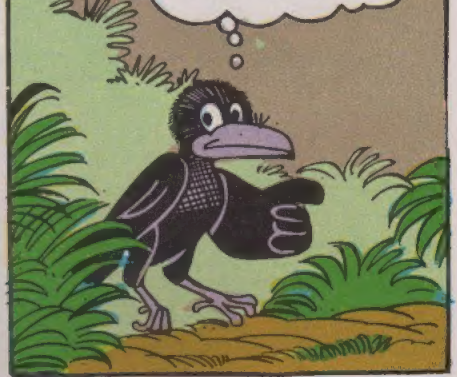
BUT THEY SOON REALISED THAT THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE CROW IN THE TREE.



OLD LIVE-STRONG WHO HAD BEEN WATCHING
THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE GROUND WAS
PLEASED WITH THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING.



NEXT COMES THE
MOST DANGEROUS PART...
BUT THERE'S NO TURNING
BACK NOW.



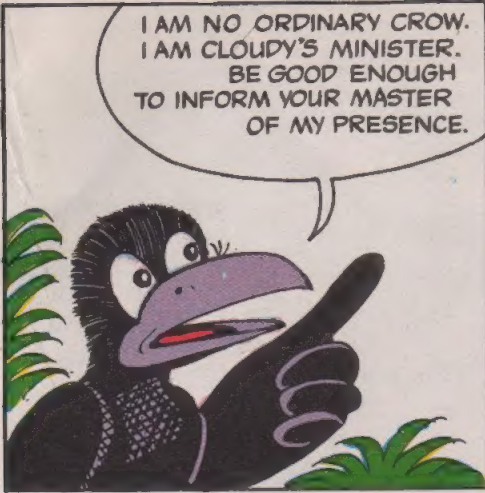
WELL,
HERE GOES.



CAW! CAW!

LOOK, A CROW!

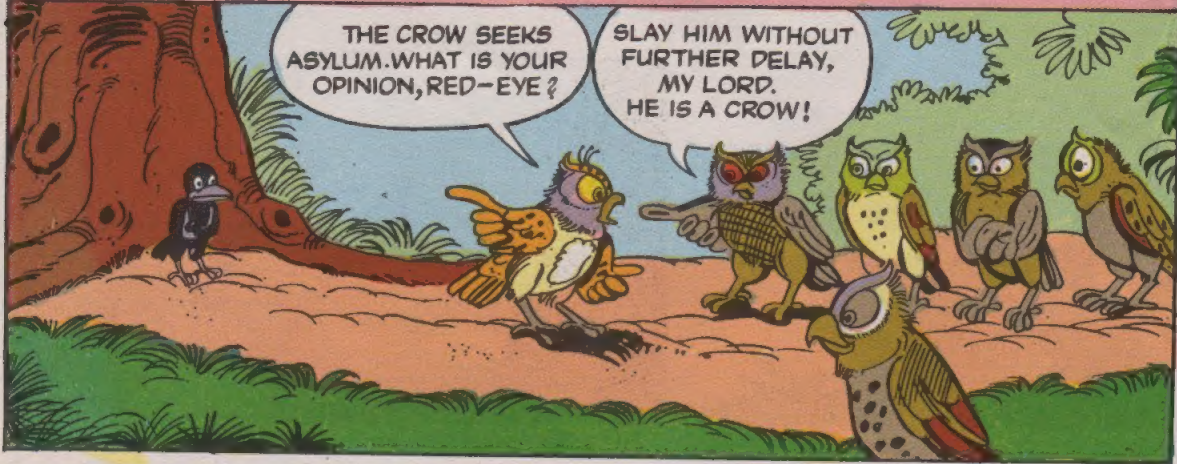




THE OWL SOON RETURNED WITH Foe-CRUSHER WHO WAS ASTONISHED TO SEE THE BATTERED CONDITION OF THE OLD CROW.



FOE-CRUSHER HAD FIVE ANCESTRAL COUNSELLORS. THEIR NAMES WERE RED-EYE, FIERCE-EYE, HOOK-NOSE, FLAME-EYE AND WALL-EAR.



BUT THE OTHER COUNSELLORS WERE MORE CHARITABLE.



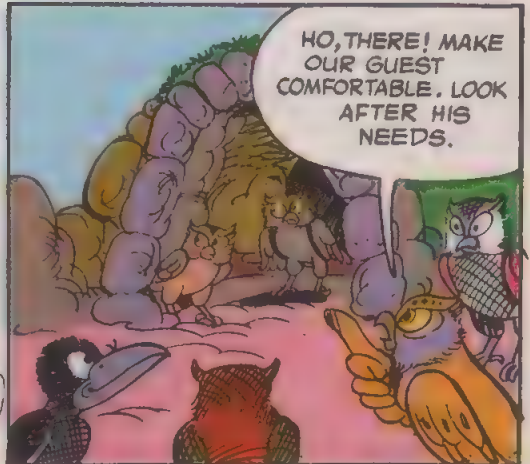
THE OWLS LIFTED UP LIVE-STRONG AND CARRIED HIM TO THEIR FORTRESS.



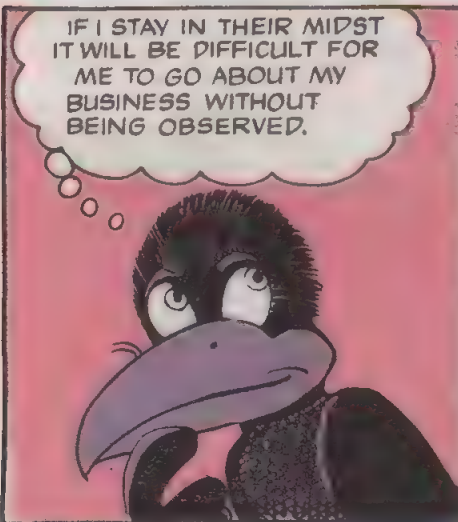
THIS IS OUR FORTRESS, SIR. HERE YOU MAY STAY IN COMFORT AND HONOUR.



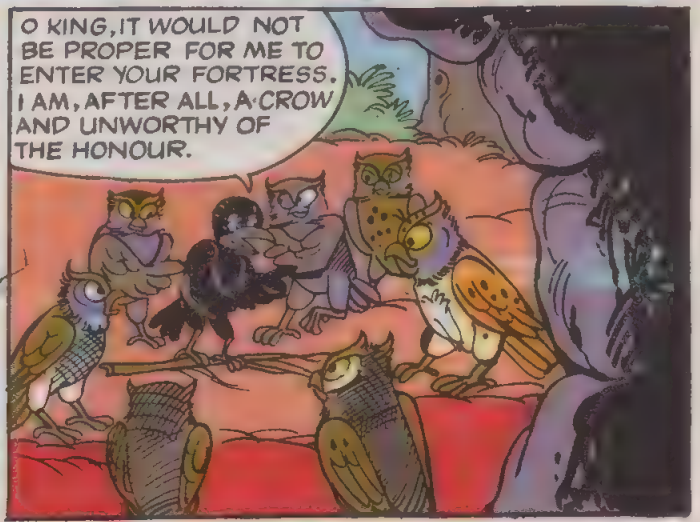
HO, THERE! MAKE OUR GUEST COMFORTABLE. LOOK AFTER HIS NEEDS.

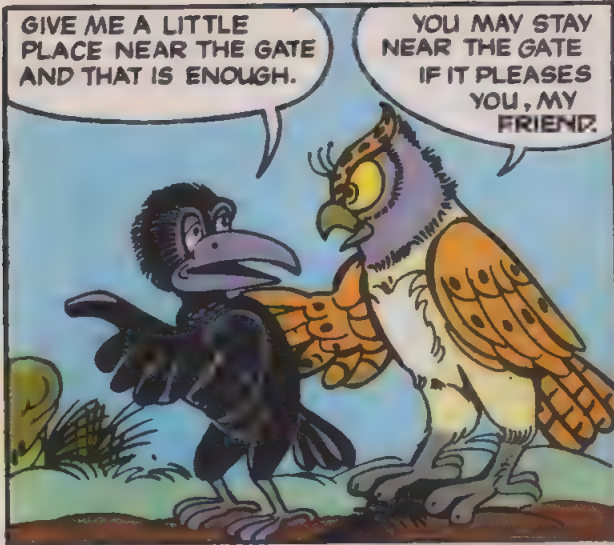


IF I STAY IN THEIR MIDST IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO GO ABOUT MY BUSINESS WITHOUT BEING OBSERVED.

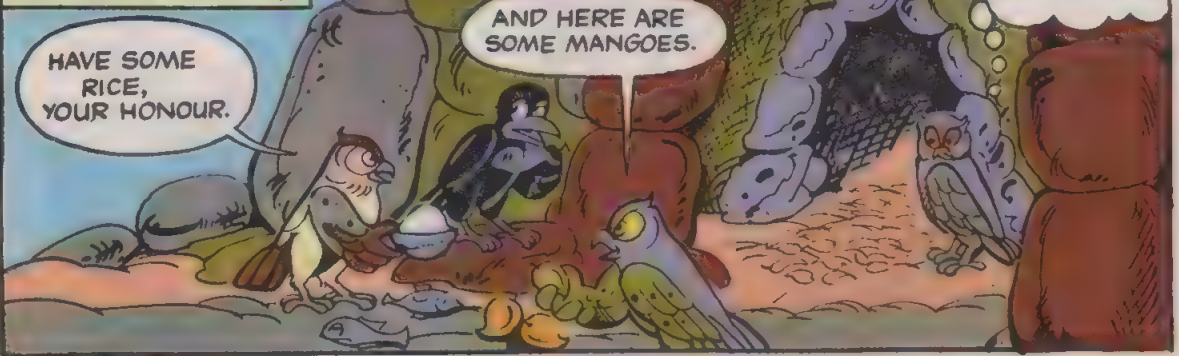


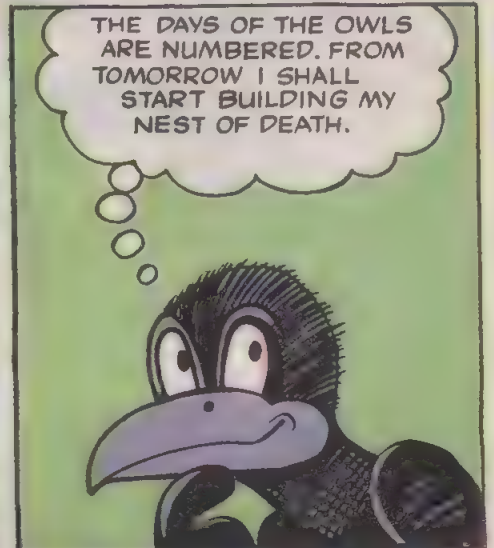
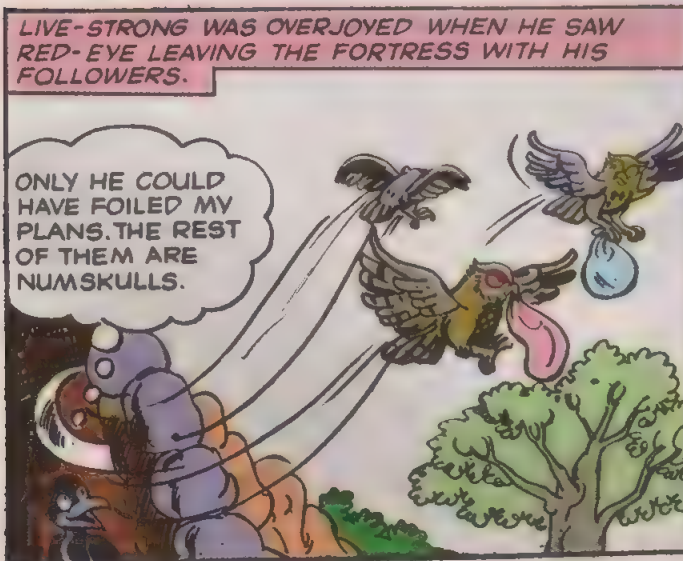
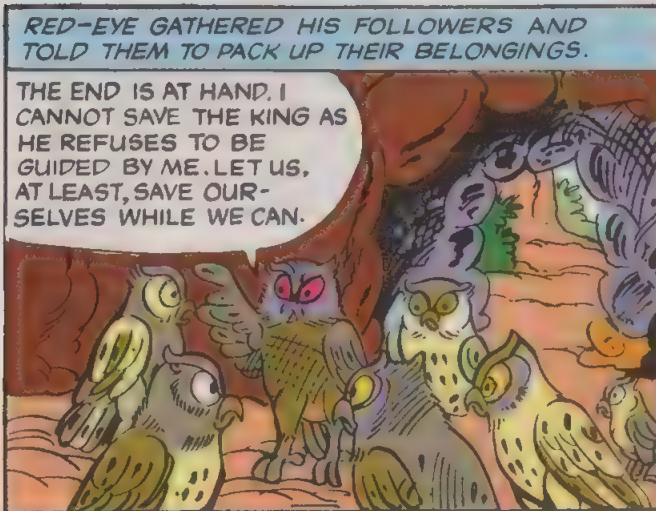
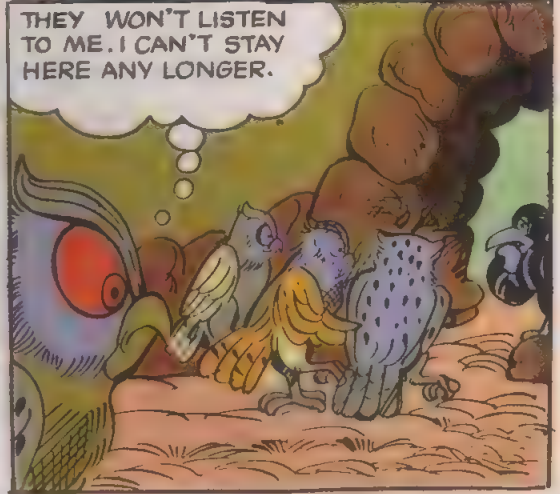
O KING, IT WOULD NOT BE PROPER FOR ME TO ENTER YOUR FORTRESS. I AM, AFTER ALL, A CROW AND UNWORTHY OF THE HONOUR.



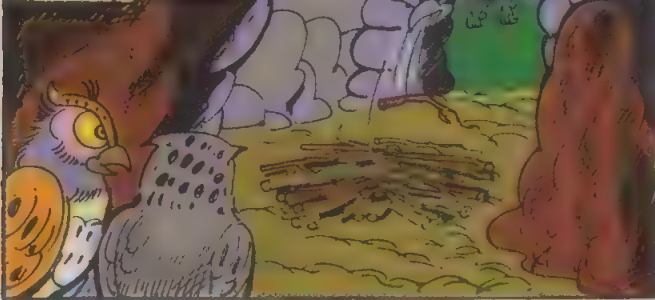


LIVE-STRONG MADE HIMSELF COMFORTABLE NEAR THE GATE AND BEGAN TO ENJOY A LIFE OF EASE AND COMFORT, UNPERTURBED BY RED-EYE'S HOSTILITY.





EACH DAY THEREAFTER, LIVE-STRONG WENT INTO THE FOREST AND RETURNED WITH A TWIG, WHICH HE DROPPED INSIDE THE GATE.



I AM BUILDING A NEST, YOUR MAJESTY. I HOPE YOU DO NOT MIND.

OF COURSE, NOT!



LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED ANY HELP.



SOON THERE WAS A LARGE PILE OF TWIGS AT THE GATE, BUT NONE OF THE OWLS STOPPED TO WONDER WHY THEIR GUEST REQUIRED SO BIG A NEST.



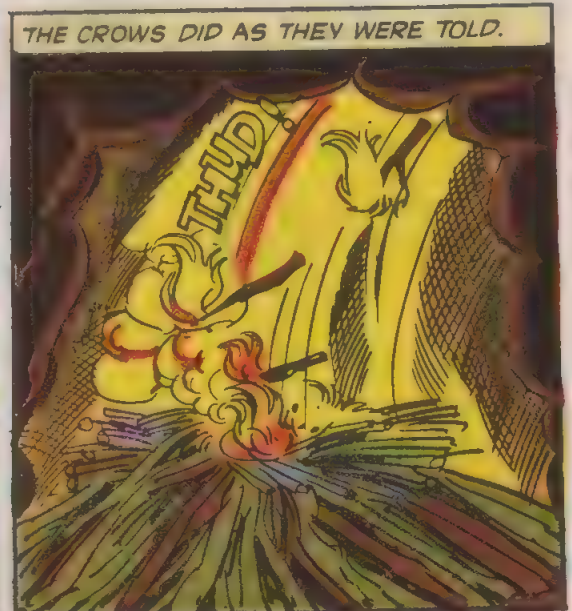
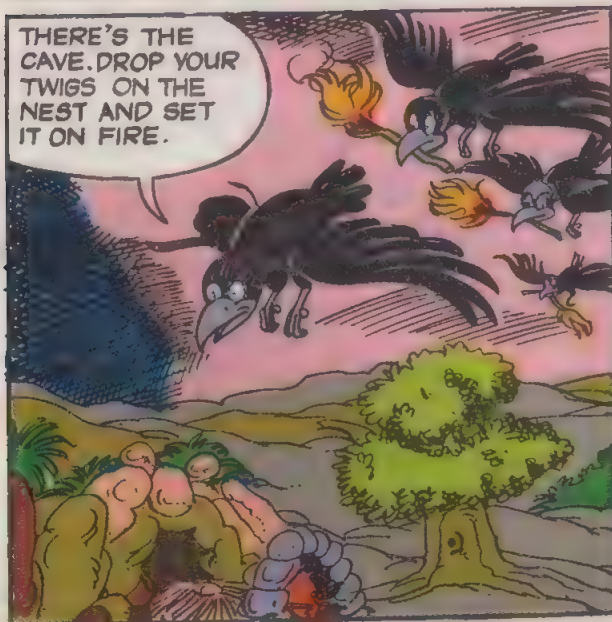
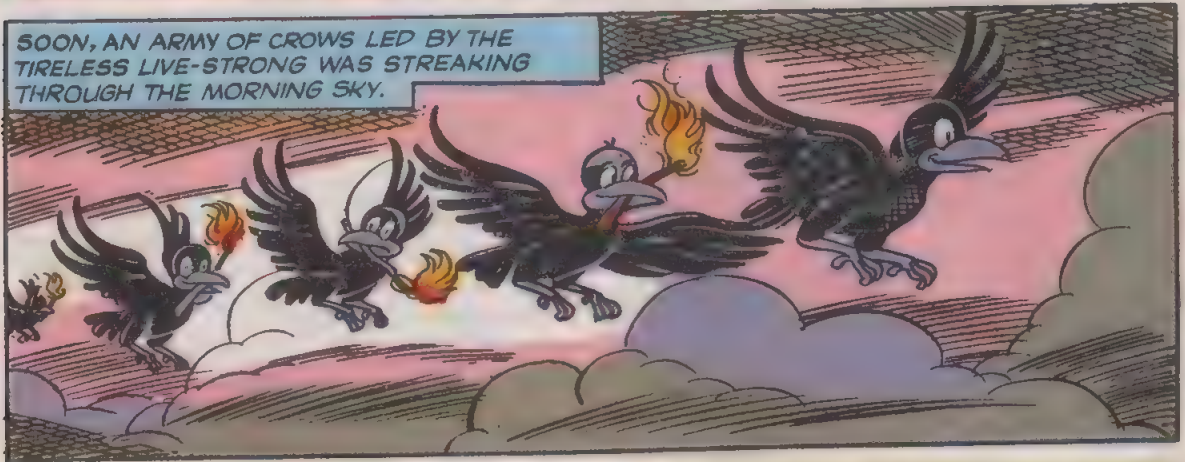
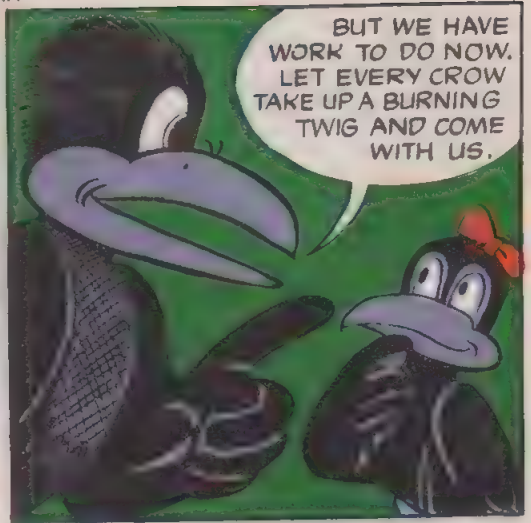
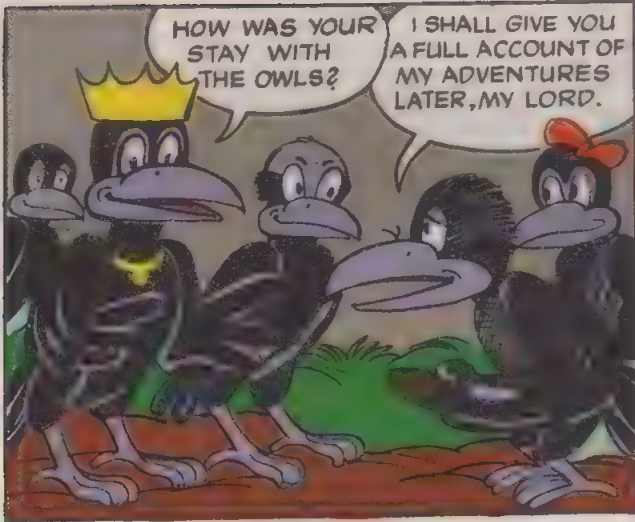
THEN ONE MORNING WHEN THE OWLS WERE ASLEEP, LIVE-STRONG QUIETLY LEFT THE FORTRESS.



HE FLEW DIRECTLY TO A NEARBY MOUNTAIN WHERE CLOUDY AND THE OTHER CROWS WERE WAITING FOR HIM.



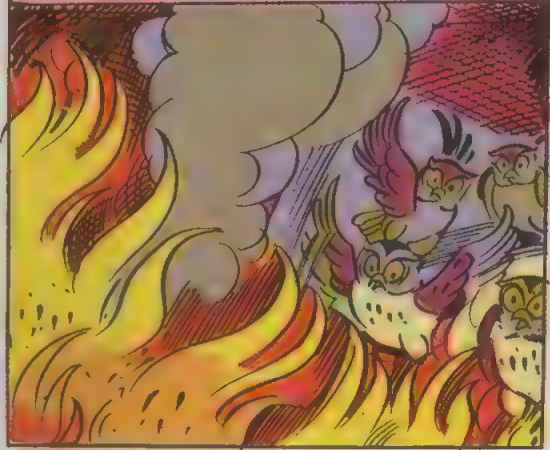
WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU BACK WITH US!



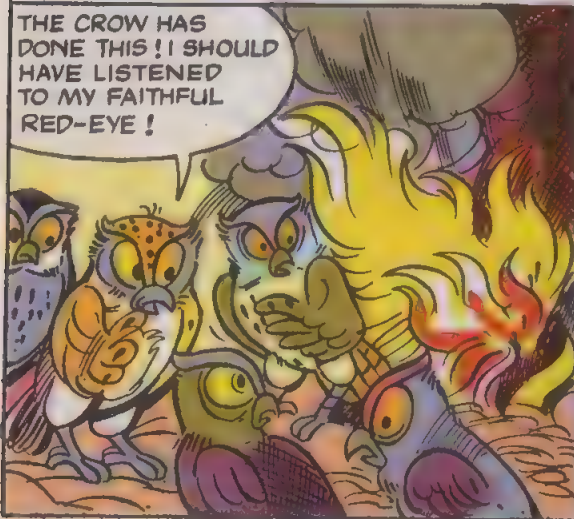
AND SOON—



THE OWLS, STILL HALF ASLEEP, TRIED TO RUSH OUT OF THE CAVE BUT WERE BEATEN BACK BY THE FLAMES.



THE CROW HAS
DONE THIS!! I SHOULD
HAVE LISTENED
TO MY FAITHFUL
RED-EYE!



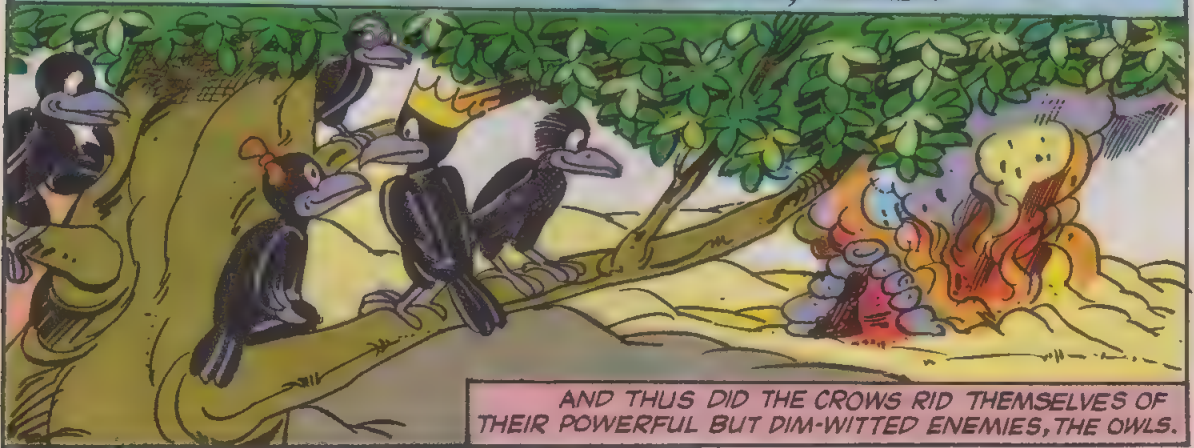
WE ARE
DOOMED!
DOOMED!

AH!



THE CAVE, CLOSED AS IT WAS FROM ALL SIDES, BECAME A FIERY FURNACE.

THOSE OF THE OWLS WHO MANAGED TO EVADE THE FLAMES WERE SUFFOCATED BY THE FUMES. ALL OF THEM, INCLUDING KING FOE-CRUSHER, PERISHED.



AND THUS DID THE CROWS RID THEMSELVES OF THEIR POWERFUL BUT DIM-WITTED ENEMIES, THE OWLS.

THE NOBLE ENEMY



A MAN WAS SEARCHING FOR GEMS ON THE TOP OF A CERTAIN MOUNTAIN.

AFTER A LONG UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH, HE WAS EXHAUSTED AND THREW HIMSELF ON THE GROUND BEHIND A ROCK.



I'LL TAKE A SHORT NAP AND THEN TRY AGAIN.

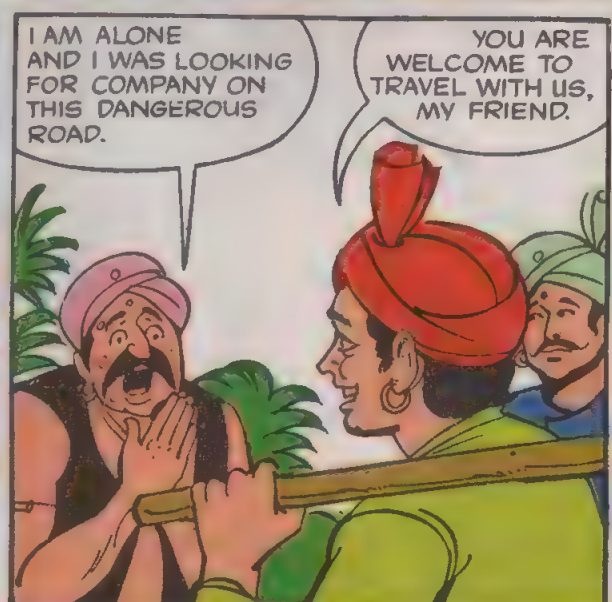
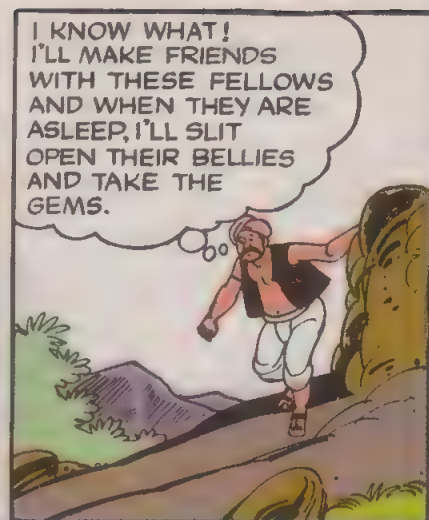
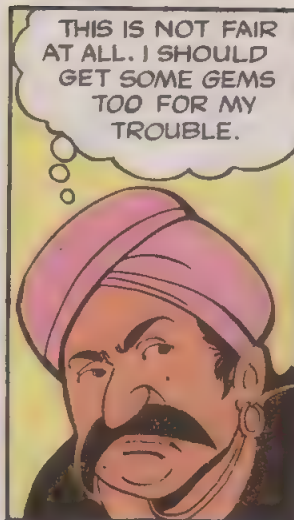


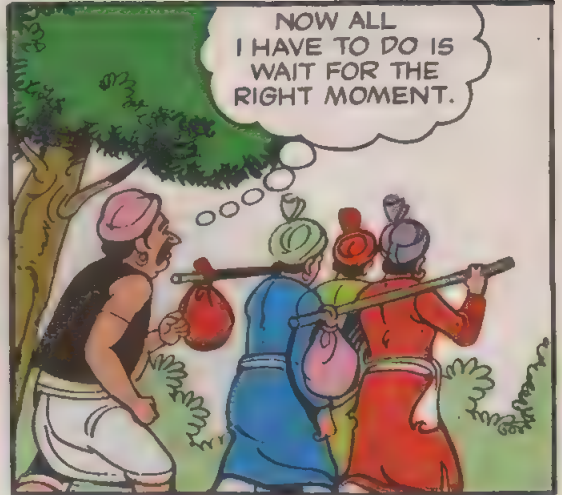
...TOO MANY DACOITS AROUND HERE...



GOOD GOD! THOSE YOUNG MEN HAVE FOUND SOME GEMS!

...THE GEMS...





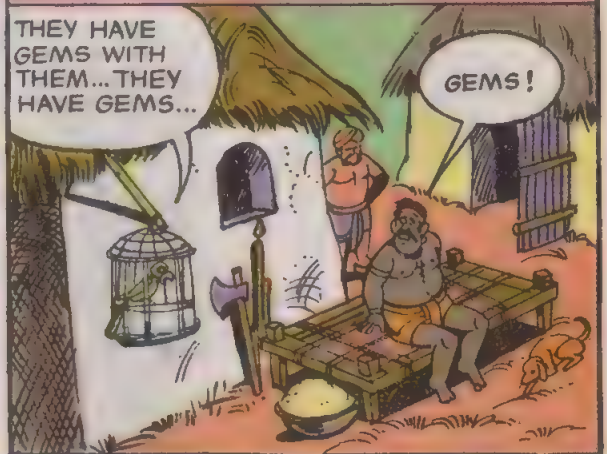
BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, THAT
MOMENT WAS NEVER TO COME. FOR
AS THEY PASSED A VILLAGE THAT LAY
ALONG THEIR ROUTE...



...A BIRD IN A ROBBER CHIEF'S HUT
BEGAN TO SING.

THEY HAVE
GEMS WITH
THEM... THEY
HAVE GEMS...

GEMS!



SEIZE
THOSE MEN!
BRING THEM
HERE!

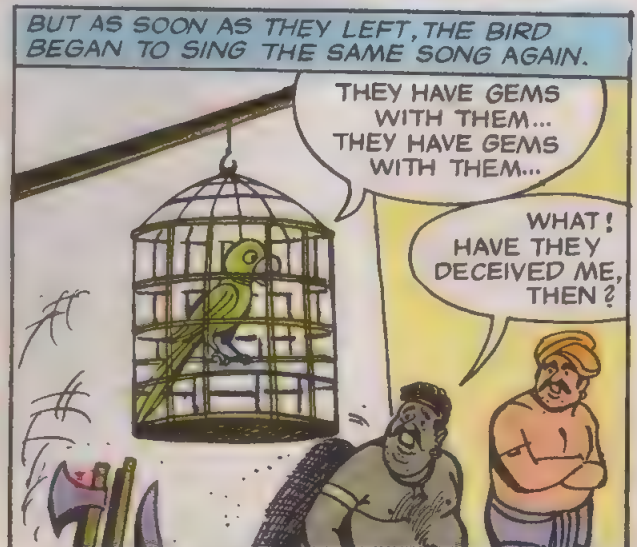
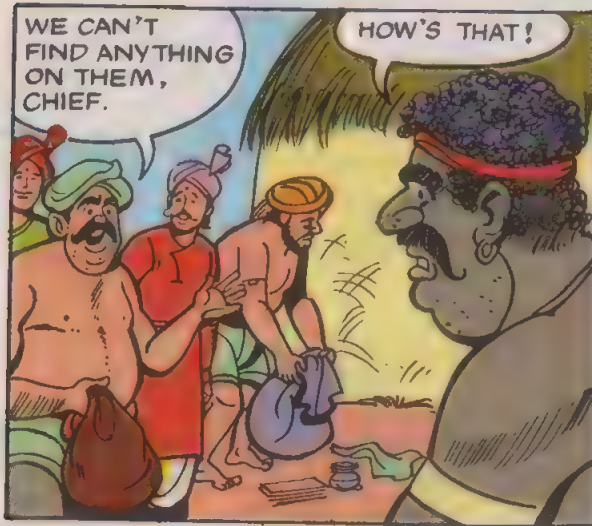
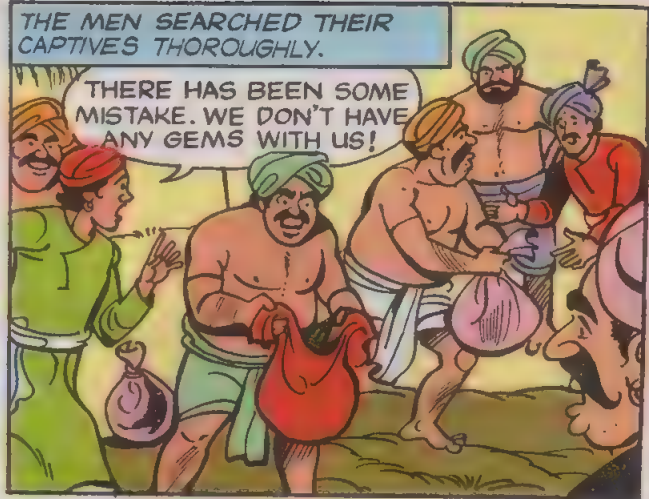


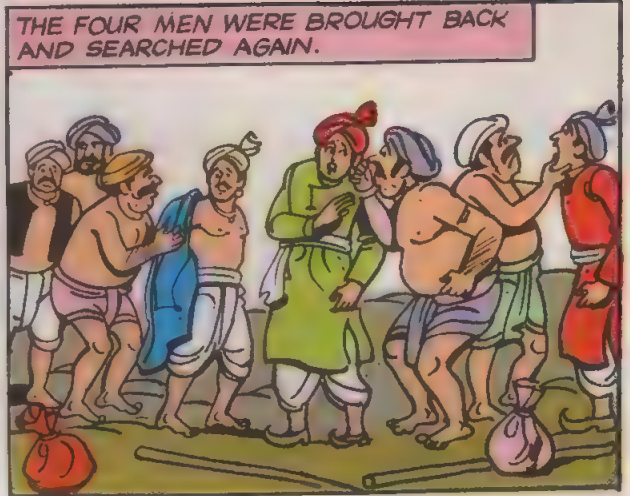
THE THREE FRIENDS AND THEIR
COMPANIONS WERE CAPTURED
AND BROUGHT BEFORE HIM.

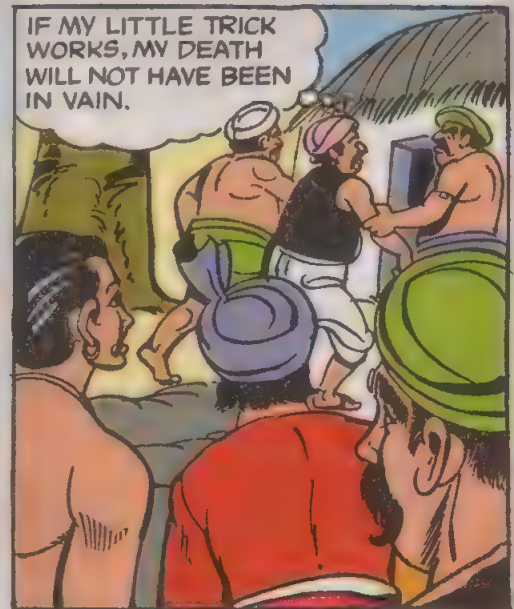
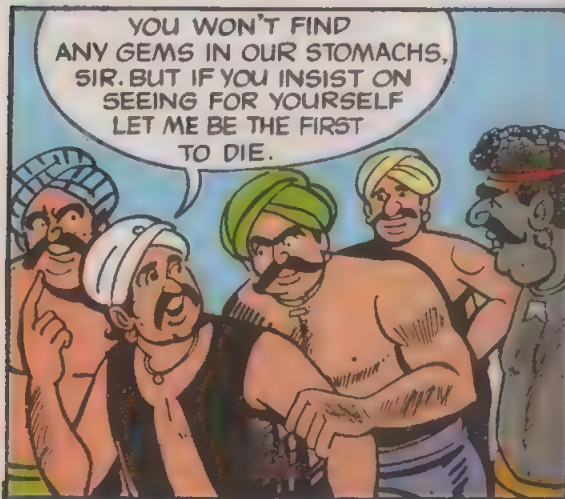
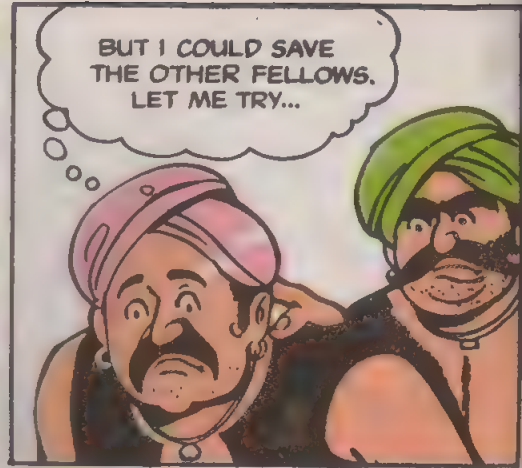
I KNOW YOU HAVE GEMS
WITH YOU. HAND THEM
OVER.

WHAT!
GEMS?

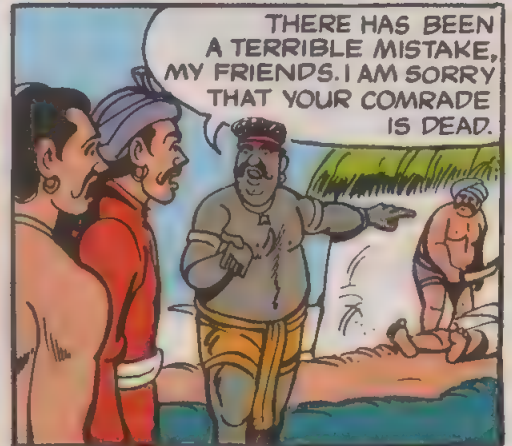








THE MAN WAS TAKEN AWAY. LATER—



LITTLE DID THE CHIEF REALISE THAT HE HAD DONE EXACTLY WHAT THE DEAD MAN HAD HOPED HE WOULD DO.

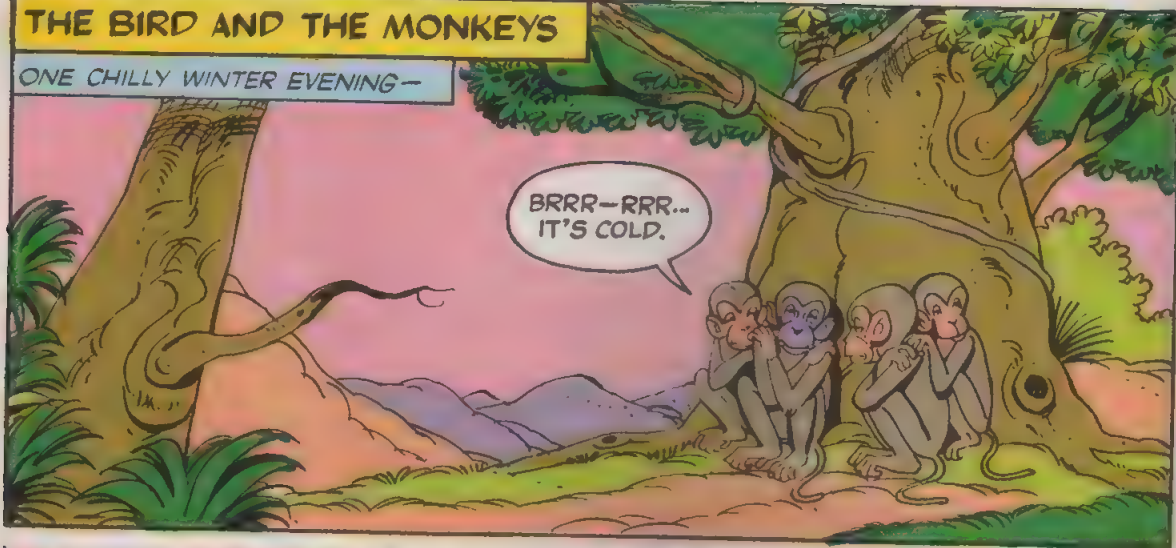
THE FRIENDS TOO, UNAWARE THAT THEY HAD BEEN SAVED BY A CLEVER RUSE, THOUGHT THEY HAD JUST BEEN VERY LUCKY, AND LOST NO TIME IN GETTING OUT OF THE VILLAGE.



MORAL: A SENSIBLE ENEMY CAN OFTEN PROVE TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND.

THE BIRD AND THE MONKEYS

ONE CHILLY WINTER EVENING—



BRRR—RRR...
IT'S COLD.



LOOK,
BROTHER!
A SPARK
OF FIRE.

IT WAS A
GLOW-WORM
GOING PAST.



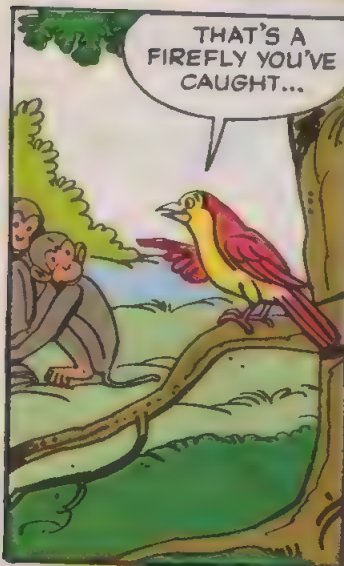
I'VE
GOT IT!

PUT IT UNDER
THIS PILE
OF LEAVES.



WE WILL SOON
HAVE A BIG
BLAZING FIRE TO
KEEP OURSELVES
WARM.

YOU ARE
MAKING A
MISTAKE,
GOOD SIR.

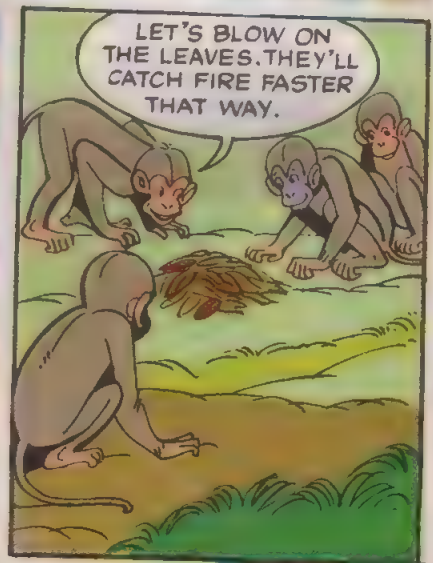


THAT'S A
FIREFLY YOU'VE
CAUGHT...

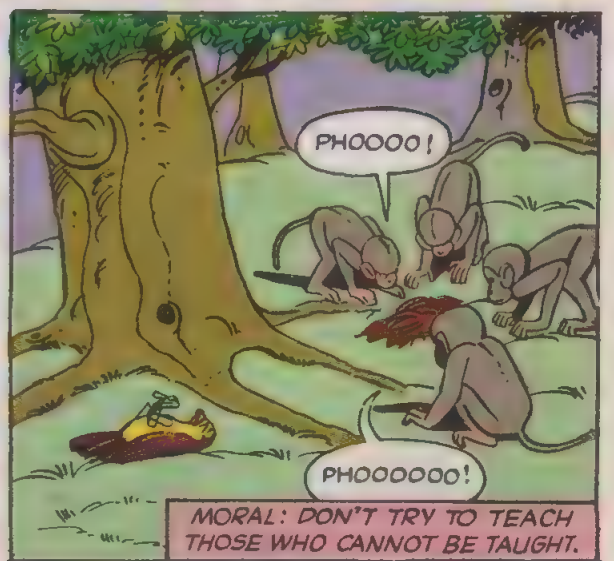
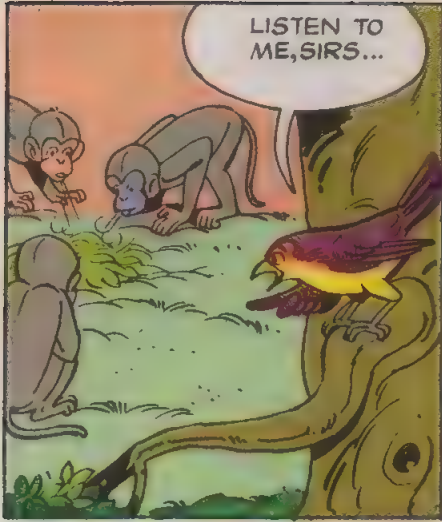


...NOT A SPARK
OF FIRE.

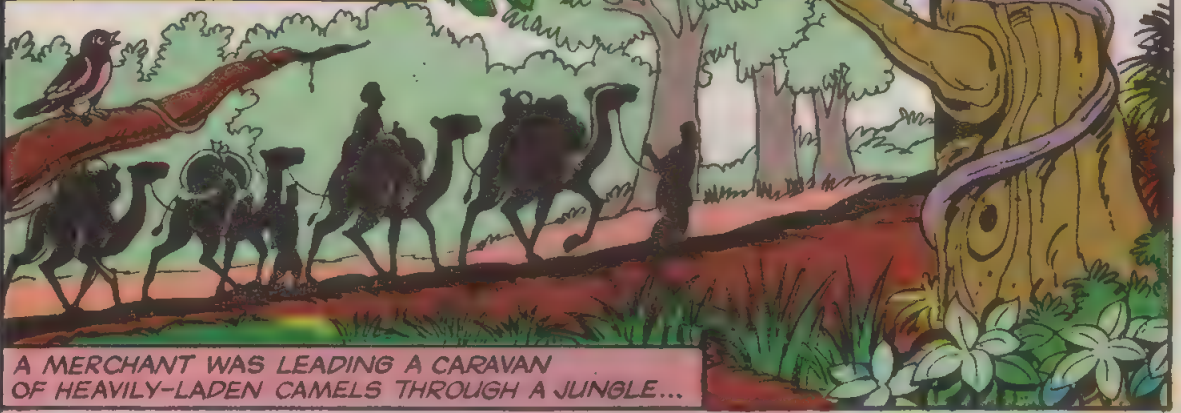
IGNORE HER!



LET'S BLOW ON
THE LEAVES. THEY'LL
CATCH FIRE FASTER
THAT WAY.



THE CAMEL WHO WAS BEGUILED BY HIS COMPANIONS



A MERCHANT WAS LEADING A CARAVAN OF HEAVILY-LADEN CAMELS THROUGH A JUNGLE...

...WHEN ONE OF THEM, OVERCOME BY FATIGUE, COLLAPSED.

LET US SHIFT HIS LOAD ONTO THE OTHERS AND BE OFF. WE MUST NOT LET THIS LAZY CREATURE DELAY US.



LATER, WHEN THE CAMEL RECOVERED HIS STRENGTH —

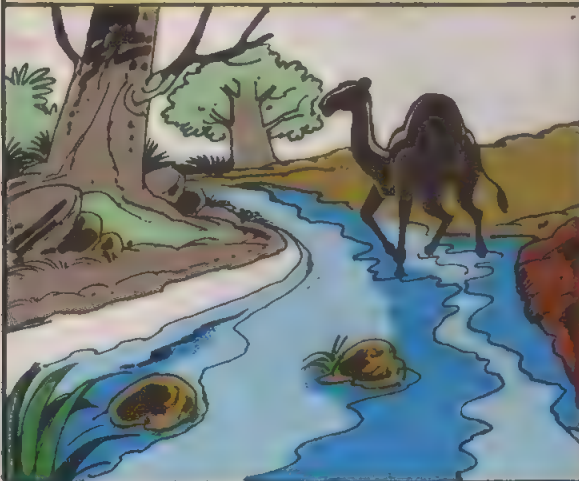
THEY HAVE GONE! AND I AM ALONE IN THIS STRANGE JUNGLE.



FORTUNATELY, THERE'S PLENTY OF GRASS HERE. AT LEAST I WON'T STARVE.

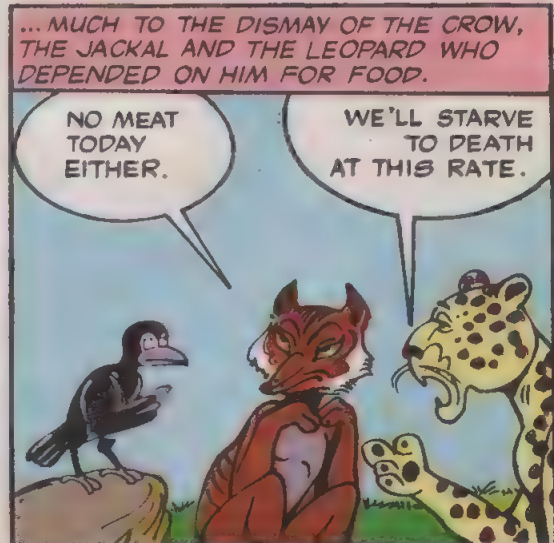
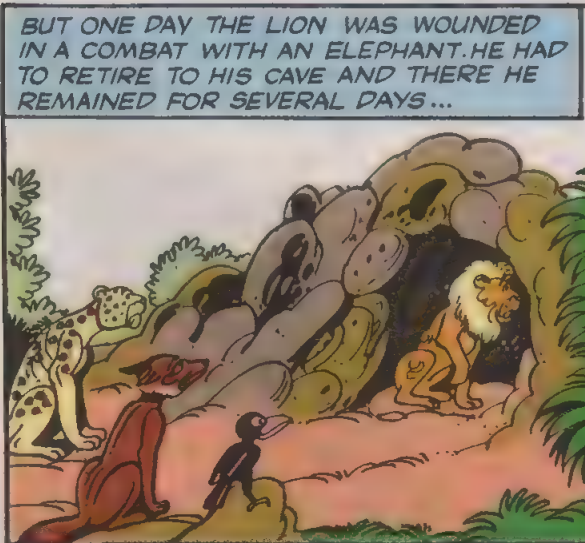
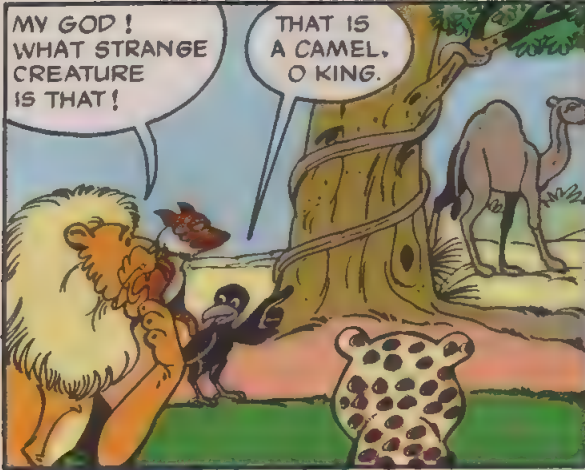


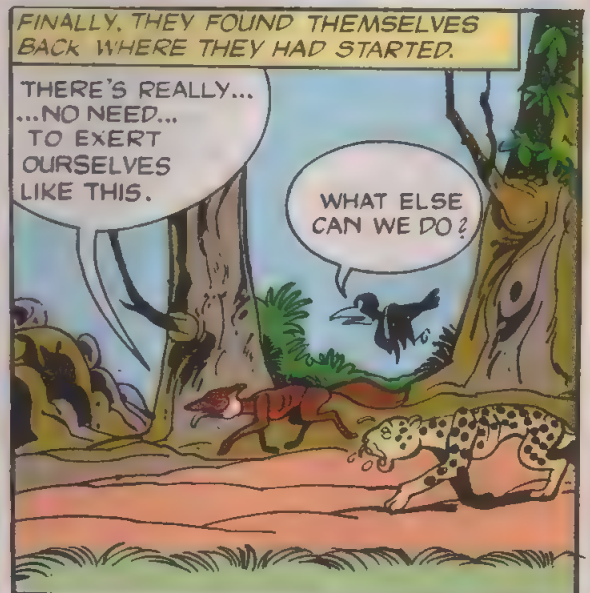
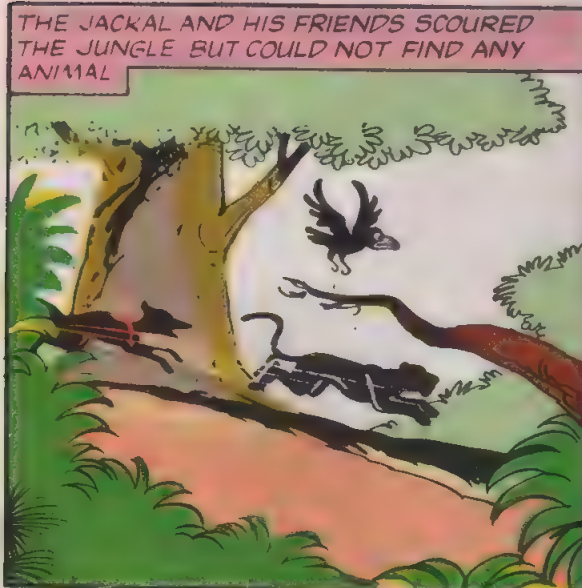
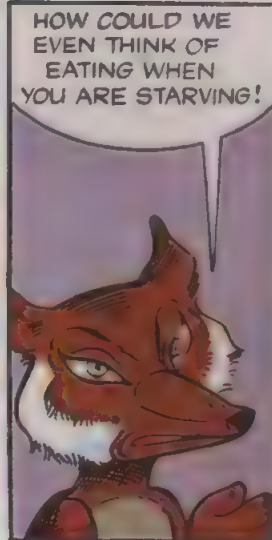
DAYS PASSED AND THE CAMEL SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE PERILS OF THE JUNGLE.

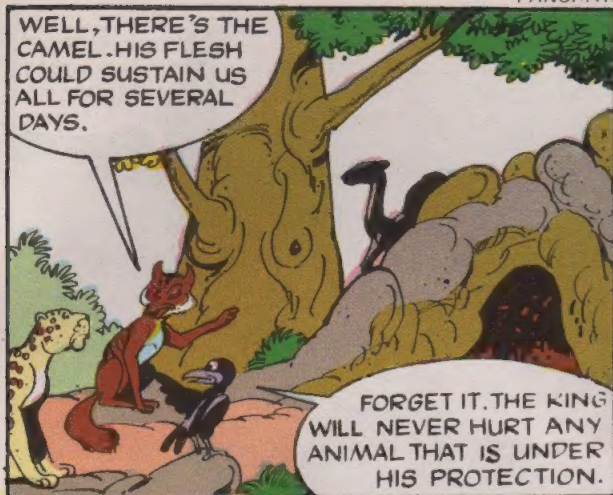


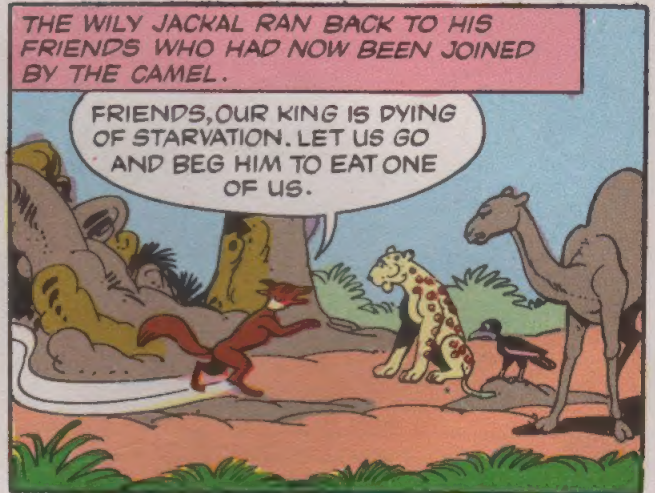
THEN ONE DAY, A LION FOLLOWED BY A LEOPARD, A JACKAL AND A CROW, CAME BY.



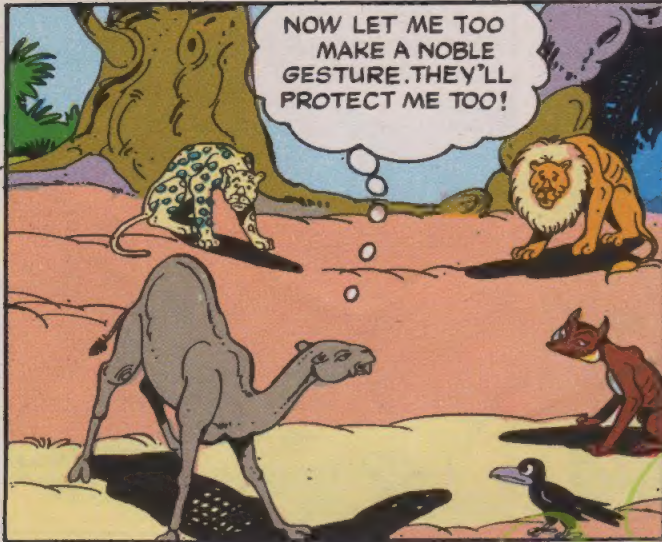












...AND KILLED HIM. THUS DID THREE ROGUES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TRUST REPOSED IN THEM BY A COMRADE.

